

Determination of Actions Required Under Component 1 of the 2008 OCAP Biological Opinion February 8, 2010

On February 8, 2010, the Smelt Working Group recommended that Action 2 be implemented to reduce negative OMR flows and potential entrainment risk to delta smelt. This recommendation is based on concern about continuing salvage at the CVP pumps. Allowable observed salvage for 2010 is 30 delta smelt (for an expanded cumulative take of 123). Of that total, 6 smelt have been salvaged by February 8 at 10 AM. Action 2's reduced OMR flows are designed to reduce the risk of adult and juvenile delta smelt entrainment by limiting the number of adult smelt that will enter the South Delta and spawn near the pumps. Based on the range of flows outlined under Action 2, the Smelt Working Group made a recommendation to reduce OMR flows to no more negative than -2000 cfs.

FWS concurs with the SWG recommendation that protective action is needed to reduce the risk of entrainment to pre-spawning adults. The Service believes that an adaptive management approach to OMR reductions is the best way to reduce entrainment risks to delta smelt while minimizing water delivery impacts to the projects. The Service has determined that pumping be reduced to achieve OMR flows of no more negative than -4000 by 5 PM on February 10, 2010. Daily monitoring of salvage will continue and if observed salvage exceeds 1 smelt per day (for an expanded take of 4), negative OMR flows will be further decreased by 1000 cfs. These reductions will continue daily until such time that salvage is reduced to no more than 1 smelt per day (for an expanded take of 4), flows average no more negative than -1250 cfs, or the SWG makes a revised recommendation, whichever comes first. Daily flows will be measured on a 14-day average, as outlined in the FWS 2008 Biological Opinion.

This determination will be reviewed next week by the SWG when more detailed distributional data will be available.